



## Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health

Concerned with the Healthy Social Emotional Development  
of Infants and Young Children

*Infant mental  
health is about  
early relationships,  
their origin and  
their power.*

*Babies develop in  
the context of  
relationships.  
Warm, sensitive  
and predictable  
relationships build  
the rapidly  
developing brain.*

*Promoting these  
early powerful  
relationships is the  
work of  
professionals from  
many disciplines.*

*CT-AIMH strives  
to tell the story for  
babies and  
supports those who  
care for them and  
their families.*

Honorable Members  
Connecticut Legislature  
Appropriations and Education Committees  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

RE: Restore State Funding for Help Me Grow

March 14, 2017

Dear Committee Members,

The Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH) writes to support the restoration of state funding for Help Me Grow. CT-AIMH is a professional organization of over 200 early childhood professionals that offers expertise in infant and early childhood mental health. Our mission is to increase the competency and capacity of the workforce serving infants and young children and their families, advocate for public policies and legislation that promote the interests of infants and young children and to raise public awareness of the importance of promoting the mental health and wellness of the most vulnerable young children in Connecticut. Given the well documented need for prevention and intervention early in life, we are urging you to keep the Connecticut Help Me Grow Program fully funded.

The Governor's recommended budget for SFY18-19 eliminates state funding for Help Me Grow, a program that connects at risk children with the services they need to be successful. The Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH) is writing to ask the state legislature to restore state funding for Help Me Grow in the final state budget.

Help Me Grow is an essential program that connects Connecticut families to a coordinated, statewide system of early detection for children at-risk for adverse developmental and behavioral outcomes along with care coordination for these children and families. Through 2-1-1 Child Development Infoline, Help Me Grow serves as a safety net for children who are not eligible for other services, such as Birth to Three and Early Childhood Special Education.

Help Me Grow is cost effective. With modest investment, children with developmental needs are connected to services more effectively thereby saving money by minimizing the need for later, far more expensive interventions.

Help Me Grow empowers parents with tools like the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, which provides parents with reassurance and alleviation of

developmental concerns, heightened awareness of developmental tracking, and strengthens parenting through increased communication and parent education.

The Help Me Grow initiative started in Connecticut and has become a national leader in early childhood systems building and promoting children's healthy development. Since 2008, it has been replicated in 27 other states.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue. With your help restoring state funding for Help Me Grow, Connecticut parents and children will get the assistance and resources they need.

Sincerely,

*Melissa Mendez*

Melissa Mendez LCSW, IMH-E, President  
Connecticut Association of Infant Mental Health